DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 246 334 CG 017 576

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TITLE Sex-Role Stereotyping of Occupations: Have We Come a Long Way?
PUB DATE Apr 84
NOTE 8p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Western Psychological Association (64th, Los Angeles, CA, April 5-8, 1984). For related document, see CG 017 577.
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Attitude Change; *College Students; Followup Studies; Higher Education; *Occupations; Sex Role; *Sex Stereotypes; Social Status; *Student Attitudes

ABSTRACT

Research has indicated a reduction in overt sex-role discrimination in employment for women, but it is not clear whether stereotypical attitudes concerning the job market have changed. To compare current students' attitudes toward several occupations with the attitudes of students 10 years ago, 105 male and female students rated 22 occupations on the same scales used by Jenkins (1974). The results for the 1983 sample were compared to the 1973 data (N=151) for each occupation and each dependent variable. The overall results indicated only minor changes in sex-role stereotyping of occupations over the 10-year period since 1973. Only 5 of the 22 occupations were significantly different. Three occupations (barber, counselor, and physical therapist) were rated as more feminine, and one (veterinarian) was rated as more masculine in 1983 than in 1973. In the ratings of status, 7 of the 22 occupations yielded significant changes, but no patterns were evident. The findings suggest that students still maintain strong distinctions in the masculinity/femininity orientation of most careers. (JAC)

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SEX-ROLE STEREOTYPING OF OCCUPATIONS: HAVE WE COME A LONG WAY?

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CG 017576

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Sex-Role Stereotyping of Occupations: Have We Come a Long Way?

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In the last decade, there have been advances in the number of women working and the type of occupations in which they have been employed. Recent research has indicated a reduction in overt sex-role discrimination (e.g., Greenfeld, Greiner, & Wood, 1980; Payne, 1982), but it is not clear whether stereotypical attitudes concerning the job market have changed. Therefore, the purpose of the present research was to compare current students' attitudes toward several occupations with students' attitudes 10 years ago.

Two studies analyzed students' views of the masculinity/femininity and status of various occupations in 1973 (Jenkins, 1974; Shinar, 1975). The studies were quite consistent; in the 16 occupations that overlapped both studies, none of the ratings differed by more than one-half of a standard deviation. The raw data in the Jenkins study were available to the authors, and therefore direct comparisons to the 1973 results could be made.

Method

In the present study, the subjects were 105 male and female undergraduate students from several introductory psychology courses. They rated 22 occupations on the same scales that were used by Jenkins (1974). In her study, 151 male and female students in introductory courses rated occupations on various

dimensions with 5-point semantic differential scales; two of these dimensions were masculinity/femininity and status. The results of the 1983 sample were compared to the 1973 data for each occupation and for each dependent variable; they were analyzed with 2 X 2 factorial analyses of variance (sex of subject by year of study).

Results

The results indicated that only 5 of the 22 occupations were significantly different ($p < .05$ or better) in ratings of masculinity/femininity over the 10-year period. Three occupations (barber, counselor, and physical therapist) were rated more feminine, and one occupation (veternarian) was rated more masculine in 1983 than in 1973. In addition, a significant two-way interaction indicated that males rated pilot as more masculine while females rated it as more feminine in 1983 than in 1973. However, both sexes still rated pilot as a masculine occupation in general. The means are presented in Table 1.

Insert Table 1 about here

For ratings of status, 7 of the 22 occupations yielded significant changes over the 10-year period, but no patterns were evident. Four of the occupations (electrician, photographer, physical therapist, and telephone operator) received lower status ratings in 1983, while the remaining three (engineer, fashion model, and minister) received higher status ratings in 1983 than in 1973. In addition, significant sex of

subject main effects were obtained for two feminine-rated occupations (elementary school teacher and nurse) and two neutral ones (child counselor and physical therapist); females in general gave higher status ratings than did the males for these occupations. The means are presented in Table 2.

Insert Table 2 about here

Discussion

The overall results indicated only minor changes in sex-role stereotyping of occupations over the 10-year period since 1973. Thus, students still seem to be maintaining strong distinctions in the masculinity/femininity orientation of most careers. These results are similar to the findings of other research that investigated different aspects of sex-role attitudes (e.g, Huston-Stein & Higgins-Trenk, 1978; Yanico, 1978), but they contradict Payne's (1982) conclusions that stereotyping in this area is declining.

More changes were obtained concerning the status of occupations, which may indicate that this dimension is less internalized. In general, it appears that attitudinal changes have not occurred to the degree that many had assumed. Both male and female students in the present sample tended to give responses that were similar to those of the students in 1973.

It would be worthwhile to determine whether students at other universities would also give these types of responses for the status and masculinity/femininity of occupations. Such

results would help explain recent reports of continued subtle discrimination in the job market. More directed efforts at attitude change in the media and in education may be needed to have impact on such strongly held beliefs as sex-role stereotyping of occupations.

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Table 1

Mean Masculinity/Femininity Ratings of Occupations for Significant Main Effects and Sex of Subject by Sample Group Interaction

Occupation	Sample	
	1973	1983
Main effects		
Barber	1.8	2.2***
Child Counselor	3.0	3.2*
Physical Therapist	3.0	3.2*
Veternarian	2.6	2.3*
Interaction		
	1973	1983
Pilot**		
Males	1.8	1.4
Females	1.6	1.9

Note. The lower the number, the more masculine the rating on the 5-point scale used.

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Table 2

Mean Status Ratings of Occupations for Significant Date of Sample and Sex of Subject Main Effects

Occupation	Date of Sample	
	1973	1983
Electrician	3.2	2.8***
Engineer	3.9	4.2*
Fashion Model	3.4	3.8***
Minister	3.5	4.0***
Photographer	3.4	3.0***
Physical Therapist	3.5	3.3**
Telephone Operator	2.2	2.0*

	Sex of Subject	
	Males	Females
Child Counselor	3.4	4.0***
Elementary School Teacher	2.9	3.2**
Nurse	3.2	3.7***
Physical Therapist	3.2	3.6***

Note. The larger the number, the higher the status rating on the 5-point scale used.

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$